REMARKS

Claim 8 stands objected to as being in improper dependent form. Claim 8 has been canceled in favor of new claim 19, which more clearly describes the subject matter of canceled claim 8.

Claims 3-10 and 12-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The claims have been amended in a readily apparent manner to more clearly describe the invention. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakabayashi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because the cited reference does not disclose or suggest the first and second lighting elements including a light-scattering layer screen printed on the light reflecting surface of the light guide plate, as in the present invention.

The Office Action states that the Nakabayashi et al. reference discloses a "first lighting element (right sided prisms)" and "a second lighting element (left sided prisms) in Fig. 23C" (emphasis added). As recognized in the Office Action, the first and second lighting elements of Nakabayashi et al. are prisms, which include grooves 204 for reflecting light. In contrast, the first and second lighting elements of the present invention include a light-scattering layer which is screen printed on the light reflecting surface of the light guide plate. This feature of the invention is not disclosed (or suggested) in Nakabayashi et al. For this reason, claim 18 is not anticipated by the cited reference.

Claims 3-7 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because it would not have been obvious to combine the cited references to derive the claimed first and second lighting elements comprising fine irregularities evenly formed on the light reflecting surface of the light guide plate.

The Nakabayashi et al. reference discloses in Figs. 23A-23C, top surfaces 311 and 312 which have grooves 204 that form a prism-like structure for reflecting light through the opposite surface. As properly recognized in the Office Action, the Nakabayashi et al. reference does not disclose or suggest fine irregularities that are evenly formed on the reflecting surface of the light guide plate, as in the present invention.

The Osakada et al. reference teaches forming rows of pits that extend across the surface of the reflecting layer. More significantly, the Osakada et al. reference also teaches that reflecting surfaces having grooves "hinder the transmission of the light with the result that uneven luminance rises over the entire surface of the light conducting plate" (see col. 2, lines 3-6). The reference further teaches that "[w]hen the grooves are cut to pass in the direction of light transmission, moreover, the luminance is extremely low because the grooves scatter almost no light in the direction of the light emitting surface" (col. 2, lines 6-9).

In view of the above-described teachings of the Osakada et al. reference, one of ordinary skill in the art working with a luminating system of Nakabayashi et al., would not have looked to the Osakada et al. reference, because Osakada et al. expressly teaches away

from using the type of grooves disclosed in Nakabayashi et al. In other words, the Osakada et al. reference expressly teaches away from the use of the grooves in light conducting plate, as in Nakabayashi et al. For this reason, one of ordinary skill in the art would have had no motivation to combine the two references.

Moreover, providing the pits 12 of Osakada et al. on the reflecting surface of Nakabayashi et al. would not be workable. The Osakada et al. reference teaches that the pits are formed by moving a bit 30 set to a negative rake angle along the surface of the light conducting plate 1 (see col. 3, lines 46-50). When the bit is moved along the surface, the surface of the light conducting plate is fractured and scattered (see col. 4, lines 1-10). Accordingly, if the bit of Osakada et al. were moved along the top surfaces 311 and 312 of the guide member of Nakabayashi et al. to form the pits, the bit would destroy the prism-like surface formed by the grooves 204. Since the grooves 204 are merely approximately 5μm to 125 μm, they would be easily destroyed. For all these reasons, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined the cited references. Therefore, claim 3 and its dependent claims 4-7 are believed to be allowable over Nakabayashi et al. and Osakada et al.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al. and Lin. Claim 8 has been canceled in favor of new claim 19. Accordingly, Applicants traverse this rejection with respect to claim 19 for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, and because of the additional features described in this claim.

Claims 9 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al. and Miura et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, from which the rejected claims depend, and because of the additional features described in these claims.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al. and further in view of Koike et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, from which the rejected claim depends, and because of the additional features described in this claim.

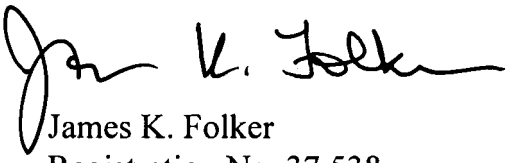
Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al. and Yamada et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, from which the rejected claim depends, and because of the additional features described in this claim.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Osakada et al., Miura et al. and Takemoto. Applicants respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, from which the rejected claim depends, and because of the additional features described in this claim.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By 
James K. Folker
Registration No. 37,538

September 18, 2007

Suite 2500
300 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 360-0080
Customer No. 24978
P:\DOCS\1324\68565\BM7649.DOC